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FOODS OF THE FUTURE PREVIEWED AT LUNCHEON FOR FARM ADVISORS

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Foods still largely in the experimental stage in the laboratories, greenhouses, and test plots of the U. S. Department of Agriculture have moved a step further toward the retail market as a result of the approval recently given them at a special research luncheon. Every item on the menu of this luncheon previously had passed rigid taste tests in the laboratory that developed it or prepared it for the table. The luncheon guests -- farm representatives from various parts of the country and members of the Department's research staff -- acting in the capacity of a final taste-testing panel, concurred in the Department's opinion of each new food.

Only one of the dishes offered - the turkey - is now generally available on the retail market and this is the first year there have been enough of these small birds to go around. It took 15 years to breed this new type and build its numbers up to the present level. More time will be needed to bring the other items on the luncheon menu before the consuming public.

The lima beans, served with the turkey, have been released to the trade, but commercial seedsmen do not yet have very large supplies of seeds of this new variety - the Peerless - developed by Department plant scientists. Nor is it yet possible to buy on the open market the large purple grapes set out on the luncheon tables. This variety, also bred by plant scientists, is so new it has not yet been named. Bread from a new wheat variety - Comanche - passed around the tables showed that this new wheat has excellent baking quality.

The green peas, also served with the turkey, are the result of research at the Western Regional Research Laboratory of the Bureau of Agricultural and Industrial Chemistry in San Francisco, Calif. These peas were preserved by a new process - "dehydrofreezing" -- in which the peas are partially dried and then quick-frozen. The product thus prepared has a fine flavor and needs less space for storage and shipping than peas frozen without the preliminary drying. The Western Regional Laboratory was responsible also for the salad - jellied fruit canned and shipped across the continent by air. The gelling agent used for this salad is "low-methoxyl" pectin, obtained from citrus and apple wastes by a process developed at the laboratory.

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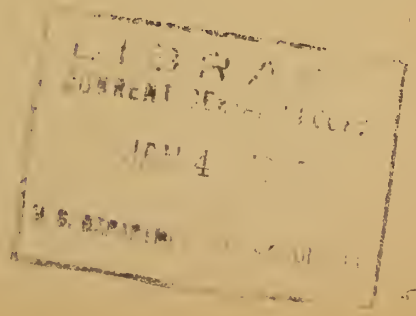

Supplementing the salad were assorted cheeses and a cheese spread from the Bureau of Dairy Industry. This Bureau contributed also a new beverage milk, which costs little to make and is highly nutritious, and ice cream made from sweet-cream buttermilk. With the ice cream went a prune cake baked in the laboratory of the Bureau of Home Economics and Human Nutrition that was established to develop large-quantity recipes using farm products currently in surplus. These recipes are designed primarily for schools that participate in the Department's School Lunch program.

The apple juice that started the luncheon and the candies that ended it were other items provided by the Bureau of Agricultural and Industrial Chemistry. The juice and some of the candy had been fortified with apple essence recovered by a process recently developed by the Eastern Regional Research Laboratory to give a true apple flavor to products that otherwise might have a very bland taste. The hard candy and nougats had been fortified with added protein, according to formulas worked out in the Southern Regional Research Laboratory to provide a better nutritional balance for sweets that otherwise would consist entirely of carbohydrates.

The following pictures show part of the research behind some of the new foods served at the Beltsville luncheon.